THE

Comfort and Crown

OF GREAT

ACTIONS.

IN A

SERMON

Preached, *Decemb.* 4. 1657.

Before the Honorable

East-India Company.

By *Edward Reynolds*, D.D.

LONDON,

Printed by *Tho. Ratcliffe* for *George Thomason* at the Sign of the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1659.

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To the Honourable

The Governour and Committee OF THE *EAST-INDIA* COMPANY.

Right Honourable,

IN the first entrance upon great Actions, it hath been the use of *good men* to begin at the *Sanctuary*, and there to seek of the Lord a *right way*; as knowing that whatever be the *services* of Men, yet the *successe* and blessing must be from *God* alone. A course which *honourable persons* amongst the *Heathen* have sometime used, as *Scipio*, in *Consultations* of *State*, went first to the *Capitol*, and then to the *Senate*. You were pleased in the *great work* which you have undertaken, thus to doe, and what *businesses* you are to prosecute by the *concurrent Counsels* and *Services* of Men, to commend first to the favor and blessing

of God. Wherein having used my *poor service*, you were pleased so far to accept of it, as to desire to have it made more publick. Hereunto I was the more easily perswaded that the great and good example of *Nehemiah* might be still before your eyes, both to direct you in your *Honourable undertakings*, and to *comfort* you in your *imitation* thereof. The Lord be pleased so to remember *you for good*, as by his *Counsel* to direct, and by his *blessing* to *reward*, what ever you go about in conformity to his *will*, and in pursuance of his *glory*. To his most *gracious protection* I commend your persons and enterprises, and am

Your Faithful Servant
in the work of the Lord,

Ed. Reynolds.

THE

THE CROVVN OF Great actions.

NEHE. 13. 31.

Remember me, O my God, for good.

THough all *Saints* have all the Members of the *new man*, and all the *Graces* of *Christ* fashioned in them (for there are no *Monsters* in his body,) *John* 1, 16. yet as in the *natural body*, some excel in sight, or hearing, or swiftness, or strength, or beauty; so in the *minde*, one excelleth in one grace, another in another, according as the *Spirit* is pleased diversly to distribute his gifts unto men, 1 *Cor.* 12. 11. *Ephes.* 4. 7. *Abraham* is renowned for Faith, *Isaac* for Meditation, *Jacob* for Plainness, *Joseph* for Chastity, *Job* for Patience, *Solomon* for wisdom, *Moses* for Meekness, *Phineas* for Zeal, *David* for Devotion, *Mary* for Love, *Nathaniel* for singleness, and as some are more eminent then others in speciall *graces*, so likewise in special *services*. *Joshuah* for a Warrior, *Hushai* for a

Counsellor, *Solomon* for a Governour, *Paul* for a Preacher, and in this Book *Nehemiah* for a wise and a valiant Manager of great and honourable Actions.

I would send a Worldling to read *Ecclesiastes*, to learn the *Vanity of the Creature*; a Lover of *Christ*, to *Solomons Canticles*; a Devout person, to *David's Psalms*; an Afflicted person, to *Jobs* Temptations; a Preacher, to *Timothy* and *Titus*; a Backslider in Faith, to the *Hebrews*; a Moralist, to the *Proverbs*; a Justitiary and Legalist to the *Romans* and *Galatians*; a Libertine, to *James*, *Peter* and *Jude*; a Souldier to *Joshua* and *Judges*; a man that would study *Gods providence*, to *Esther*; and those who goe about *great* undertakings, to the reading of this Book of *Nehemiah*.

There are many things which such men may observe in him for their special direction. And because he desires *God to remember them*, I shall not look upon it as a departing from my Text, if we, upon this solemn occasion, do a little *remember them* likewise, and consider of what use they may be unto you.

1. Observe his care of Forein and *remote intelligence* and correspondence; when he was in *Shushan*, he made enquiry of the state of his *Brethren* in *Jerusalem*, *Chap.* 1. 1, 2, 3. You that undertake *great Actions*, must be especially careful to have accurate and distinct *intelligence*. You have no *Hushais* amongst you to save you that labour, 2 *Kings* 6. 12. And therefore as the *Historian* said of Princes, πολλοὶ βασιλέων ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ πολλὰ ὦτα, You had need

Zenophon. Cyropæd.

need have many *eyes* and many *ears* in many parts of the World, to see and hear by them, what you cannot by your selves. *Abrahams* intelligence recovered *Lot*, *Gen.* 14. 14, 16. *Rebecca* her intelligence saved *Jacob*, *Gen.* 27. 42. The intelligence which the *Spies* brought, animated *Israel*, *Josh.* 2. 23, 24. *Abigails* intelligence saved *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 14. *Hushai's* intelligence preserved *David*, 2 *Sam.* 17. 15, 22. Many a man by speedy intelligence is enriched, is delivered: it was the way whereby *Joshua* overcame the Kings of *Canaan*, *Josh.* 10. 9. by coming suddenly upon them, before they could have intelligence of it; and in like manner, *Abimelech* discomfited *Gaal* by the benefit of secret intelligence, *Judg.* 9. 30, 31, *&c.*

2. His extraordinary *love*, *zeale*, and *tenderheartedness* towards his *Countrey*, and the *honour* thereof; and his *zealous prayer* unto *God* night and day for it, *Chap.* 1. 4, 6. Men of great and remote *imployments*, should be very careful by their vigilancy, to prevent any *reproach* and *injury* against the Land of their *Nativity*, and to manage all their dealings with such *honour* and *integrity*, as that the very *Nation* which brought them forth, may have renown in the remotest parts of the *World*. *Deut.* 4. 6. *Keep the Statutes and judgements which the Lord commanded*, *saith* Moses, *and doe them*; *for this is your wisdom*, *and your understanding in the sight of Nations*, *which shall hear all these Statutes*, *and say*, *surely this great Nation is a wise and understanding people.*

3. His not being contented with his own *honour* and *greatneſſe*, who was in ſo near attendance upon the *greateſt Prince* on the Earth, and was ſure enough to live in *plenty* and *proſperity* himſelf, though his Brethren were in affliction. But his improving that intereſt for the *ſervice* of *community*, and the particular *comfort* of *Gods* people. Men of great and publick *undertakings*, ſhould not look onely after narrow and *domeſticall intereſts*, but ſhould make uſe of their own *greatneſſe*, *power*, *wealth*, prevalency with *potent perſons*, to do reall offices of *Love* and *Service* to the poor Church of *God*. *Eſther* might poſſibly have lived in *ſplendor* and *royall majeſty*, though her people had been deſtroyed; but ſhe chuſeth rather the danger of periſhing, then to neglect their ſalvation. *If I periſh, I periſh, Eſth.* 4. 16. And ſo *Moſes* choſe *rather affliction with the people of God, then to be called the ſon of Pharaohs daughter, Heb.* 11.24,25. *Nature* hath implanted even in ſenſeleſs and inanimate *creatures*, ſuch a *love of community*, as makes them forget their own proper *motions*, to preſerve them whole from violence or reproach. How much more ſhould we lay to heart *publick evils*, even then when our own condition may ſeem proſperous?

4 His prudent vigilancy in viewing the *ſtate of the City* ſecretly, and then imparting his *commiſſion* to his *Brethren*, Chap. 2. 12, 18. In great works, *perſonall prudence* and *joynt communication*, are ſingularly neceſſary for the happy management of them: *For in the multitude of Counſellors is ſafety*, Prov. 11. 14.

5. His

5. His *pious courage* animating his *Brethren*, bearing up himself against *envious aspersions* of the enemy, and drawing in his *Brethren* into an unanimous society in great and honourable works; and all upon *grounds of Faith*, giving assurance of *divine help*, *Chap.* 2. 17, 18, 20. *&* 3. *per totum*, *&* 4. 1, 5, 14. *Faith* is a foundation of *courage* (no *grace* so valiant as that, *Heb.* 11. 33, 34. 1 *John.* 5. 4.) and *Courage* a foundation of *constancy*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. And therefore *Faith and fortitude* are necessary graces for those who will go with *resolution* through great and difficult *undertakings*. And therein a special *wisdom* to work all in a sweet and amicable concurrence, to draw one way, and to joyn with speciall accord, *hearts and hands* in the same work; for differences and divisions will unjoynt the frame of *great actions*, and as a breach in a wall, will minister unto adversaries an occasion of advantage.

6. His wise discovery of adverse counsels and preparations, *Chap.* 4. 8, 9, 15. There never was any great enterprise without *speciall opposition*. *Zorobabel* met with mountainous obstructions in the *great work* which he went about, *Zach.* 4. 7. (onely these Obstructions are more secret and visible then Mountains; and therefore men that engage in *great works*, must ever have their *eyes running* to and fro to discover dangers, that they may prevent them, *Prov.* 22. 3.

7. His special care upon all *emergent occasions*, to call the people together for new and further

counsels,

counsels, *Chap.* 4. 19, 20. Great businesses being full of variety of incidentall and circumstantiall *contingencies*, will frequently call for further *resolutions* and *renewed consultations*, will like great Vessels many times spring a leak, and require immediate application of *remedies*. And therefore it is a part of necessary *wisdom*, as in great *Cities*, so in great *Actions*, to have *Philistians* always within call, who may timely advise upon all needfull expedients for safety, *Iudg.* 19. 30.

8. His indefatigable labour night and day, being not onely a *commander*, but an *example* of unwearied patience to all the people, *Verse* 22, 23. And all great *Actions* will require this part of *self-denial*. A man either of *sensual* or *sluggish principles*, is very unfit for the management of any arduous and weighty affairs. It was a great businesse but one would think a sad one, for a man to sacrifice his *beloved Son*, and yet *Abraham* rose *up early* to go about it, *Gen.* 22. 3.

9. His compassionate zeale mixed with wisdom, impartiality, and self-denial, for the *poor* which were oppressed, rebuking the *oppressors*, and forbearing his own just *allowances*, and preventing the injuries of *servants* and *officers*, *Chap.* 5. 14, 15, In great employments which pass through many mens hands, it is neither impossible nor improbable, for *innocency* many times to *suffer*, and much wrong to be done, and that *reductivè*, even by good men themselves, if their ears be too much open to misrepresentations; as we see it was in the case of *Ziba* and *Mephibosheth*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 1, 4.

16. 1. 4 Vnleſs much care, wiſdom, and courage be uſed, to require *all officers* to do the things belonging unto them, with *juſtice* and expedition. And here give me leave to commend unto you the care of your *poor Brethren*; a duty which *Apoſtles* themſelves have put one another in minde of, *Gal.* 2. 10. You cannot be without many *objects* of that kinde, even amongſt thoſe who ſerve you in theſe expeditions; ſick Mariners, deſolate Widows, poor Children: it would be a work of a *ſweet ſavor to God*, to have a ſteady ſtock going for the advantage of theſe, as well as of the *Merchants*. Their *Prayers* may be wind in your *Sails*, and bring down a *bleſſing* on all your *undertakings*.

10. His *bounty* to the work, *He bought no Land* but ſpent himſelf upon the ſervice, and upon *hoſpitality* to the people, *Chap.* 5. 16, 17, 18. Covetouſneſs is not only a bar and obſtruction to all *honourable* undertakings, but doth miſerably corrupt and ſpoil them by a *ſelf-ſeeking management*, when men drive on and interweave domeſtical *intereſts*, under the ſpecious pretence of *publick good*. And therefore all *great works* do require great and large *hearts*, for the promoting of them. It was a great work, the building of the *Sanctuary*, and the *Lord* gave greatneſs of heart to the people to contribute unto it, *Exod.* 36. 5. It was a great work, the building of the *Temple*, and *God* gave immenſe largeneſſe of heart to *David* and his Princes in offering thereunto: For the ſums offered, were ſo great as ſurpaſſed the treaſures of any other

Princes

Budæus de Asse lib. 4. Breerwood de Nummis. pag. 16. Raleigh. lib. 2. cap. 17. sect. 9. μὴ διαφέρει πότερον ῥιγῶν ἢ θαλπόμενος τὸ πρέπον ποιεῖς, καὶ πότερον κακῶς ἀκούων ἢ εὐφημούμενος. Marc. Anton. lib. 6. sect. 2. Vid. lib. 10. sect. 11.

Princes which we read of, *Sardanapalus* onely excepted; as the learned *Breerwood*, and Sir *Walter Raleigh* have observed, 1 *Chro.* 22. 14. & 29. 14. See *Isa.* 60. 6, 7.

11. His undiscouraged *constancy*, notwithstanding all the threats, slanders, letters, prophecies, misreports, and wicked artifices, purposely used by the subtle Enemies, to weaken and dishearten his resolutions, *Chap.* 6. None are fit for *great actions*, who are not men of constant and undaunted spirits, who cannot go through *evil report* as well as *good*, whom the integrity of their own *consciences* cannot bear up above the reproaches of enemies, 1 *Cor.* 4. 3. 2 *Cor.* 6. 8, 9, 10.

12. His wise and pious care to communicate part of the charge unto faithfull *coadjutors*, whom he advanced, not barely for their *relation* unto him, but for their *fidelity* to the *service*, *Chap.* 7. 2, 3. Since it is impossible for *great actions* to be managed without much concurrence, singular care is to be used that *good* and *faithfull men*, by whose care, and prudence, and prayers, they may be promoted, be employed in the transaction of them, that even near *relations*, do not prevaile with us, to entrust great works in the hands of weak or wicked men. *Consanguinity* hath a strong byass even with good men. *Barnabas* did earnestly contend to take *Mark* along in his and *Pauls* expedition to visit the *Churches*, which *Paul* opposed, *Acts* 15. 37, 38. The *Apostle* doth implicitly give us the reason of it in another place, *Col.* 4. 10. where he telleth us, that *Mark* was sisters son to *Barnabas*.

Vid. Baron. An. 45. sect. 41.

13. His

13. His ſingular *zeal* for the purity of the people of *God*, that they might be an *Holy Seed*; and for the *Offices* of *Gods houſe*, that they might not be polluted, *Chap.* 7. His care of the *Worſhip* of *God*, Preaching, Praying, Faſting, renewing *Covenant*, reſtoring intermitted *Duties*, *Chap.* 8, 9, 10. Of the *Chambers* of *Gods houſe*, that they might not be defiled, *Chap.* 13. 7, 9. Of the *Portions* of the *Prieſts* and *Levites*, that they might not be detained, *verſ.* 10, 14. Of the *Sabbath*, that it might be duly ſanctified, *Verſ.* 15, 22. Of the *courſes and ſervices* of the *Prieſts and Levites*, that they might be appointed, *Verſ.* 30, 31. Of the *Holy ſeed*, that that might not be by *Heatheniſh marriages* corrupted, *Verſ.* 23, 30. Of the *Name of God*, that that might be duly praiſed and glorified, *Chap.* 12. By all which we learn, that the greater mens care is of the *ſervice* and *glory of God*, the fitter *inſtruments* they are to do great works, and the more likely to proſper in the doing of them; becauſe, *They that honor God, he will honor*, 1 Sam. 2. 30. So long as *Uzziah ſought the Lord*, *God made him to proſper*, 2 Chro. 26. 5. *Hezekiah truſted the Lord*, and clave to him, and the *Lord* was with him, *and bleſſed him whitherſoever he went*, 2 King. 18. 5, 6, 7. 2 Chron. 31. 21. But when *Jehoſhaphat* joyned with *Ahaziah*, who did very wickedly, the *Lord* brake his ſhips, and diſappointed his expedition, 2 *Chron.* 30. 35, 37.

Romanos magnos fecerunt domi induſtria, foris juſtum Imperium, animus in conſulendo liber, neque libidini neque delicto obnoxius. Vid. Aug. de Civit. Dei. lib. 5. c. 12. & 15.

Laſtly, His ſpecial wiſdome and care to *heal* the *ſinfull breaches* and *diviſions* which were amongſt the people, cauſing them to enter into a

ſolemn promiſe, to make reparations of all injuries done unto their *poor Brethren*, and to prevent the reproach of the *Heathen*, *Chap.* 5.11, 12, 13. In great *companies*, and great *buſineſſes*, it is hardly poſſible to carry things on in ſo ſmooth and regular a way, but that ſome *differences* of judgment may ariſe, and cauſe difficulties, breaches, and obſtructions in the whole *work*; and as our *Saviour* ſaith of *Kingdoms*, *Cities*, *Houſes*; ſo may we of *companies* and *undertakings*, that *diviſions* will endanger their ſtanding, *Matth.* 12.25. It is one of *Gods* ſore judgements, when he intendeth to ſhatter and diſappoint *enterpriſes*, to ſend a *ſpirit of diviſion* amongſt thoſe who are concerned in it, as he did between the *men of Shechem and Abimelech*, *Judg.* 9.23. and between the Hoſt of the *Midianites*, *Judg.* 7.22. and of the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, and *Edomites*, 2 *Chron.* 20.22, 23. And ſo he threatneth to do with the *Egyptians*, *Iſai.* 19.2. and with the *Armies of Gog and Magog*, *Ezek.* 38.21. The like whereunto we read of in *Pauſanias*, and in *Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus*. In which caſe, wiſe and prudent men, as *Nehemiah* here, will uſe their utmoſt indeavours to heal *breaches*, to cloſe up *diviſions*, to prevent *miſtakes*, to finde out *expedients*, wherein all may readily agree, for the preventing of thoſe evils, which *differences* of judgement, if not timely cured, may be likely to produce. In which caſe, there is nothing more conducent then mutual *mildneſſe*, *meekneſſe*, and *condeſcenſion*. So *Abraham* healed the breach which was going to be made between [a] his family, and

Pauſan. lib. 10. *pag.* 654. *Gr. Lat.*

Dionyſ. Hal. Antiquit. lib. 7. *p.* 429.

[a] *Vid. Excm. plum Characratis & Charaphontis apud Xenophon. lib.* 2. *Memorabil pag.* 744, 646. *Edit. Pariſ.* 1625.

and the family of *Lot* his Kinſman, *Gen.* 13. 7, 8. Therefore *Rulers* are called *Healers*, *Iſai.* 3. 7. And ſo *Chriſt* is deſcribed as a *binder* up, and a ſtrengthner, *Ezek.* 34. 16. And *Moſes*, the firſt Ruler which God choſe for his people, was the *meekeſt man alive*, *Numb.* 12. 3. Certainly *meekneſſe* is a very great *ornament*, and a very great *inſtrument of power*. We may think that we ſhew our *power* by our ſtiffneſſe and inflexibleneſs; but it is a great *evidence of power* to be of an *yeelding* and a *meek diſpoſition*. It ſhews, firſt, a great power which a man hath *over his own ſpirit*, which is a work of more power ſometimes then the taking of a City, *Prov.* 16. 32. Secondly, It ſhews great humility, and ſelf-denial, when as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *Nothing is done through ſtrife, or vain-glory, but in lowlineſſe of minde, each eſteemeth other better then themſelves*, *Phil.* 2. 3. And *do mutually ſubmit unto one another in the fear of God. Epheſ.* 5. 21. 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. And *in honour prefer one another*, *Rom.* 12. 10. The *Apoſtle* made himſelf *a ſervant to all*, and ſtudied to pleaſe all for their good, 1 *Cor.* 9. 19, 22. *Faciet ſapiens*, ſaid *Seneca*, *& quæ non probavit, ut ad majora tranſitum inveniat.* A wiſe man will ſometimes deny his own judgment, in order to a greater *good*. And it is an excellent *direction* of *Hilary*, *Ex alienis utilitatibus placere, nec offendere ex propriis.* To be ready to make it appear unto other men, that I am more deſirous to pleaſe them upon the accompt of their profit, then to offend them upon the accompt of mine own. *Iſtæ cogitationes deprimentes ſuperbiam, & texentes charitatem, faciunt*

Vid. Chryſoſt. in Pſal. 131. 1.

Latius regnes avidum domando ſpiritum, quàm ſi Lybiam remotis Gadibus jungas, & uterque Pollus ſervias uni Horat. Vid. Philip. Camerar. Hor. ſubciſiv. part. 3. c. 26.

Lactant. lib. 3. c. 15.

Hilar in Pſal. 54.

Auguſt. 83. quæſt. qu. 71.

faciunt onera fraterna invicem libentissimè sustineri, saith St. *Austin*. Thirdly, It imitates the example of *Christ*, who did *not look on his own things*, but *on the things of others*, *Phil.* 2. 4, 5. And of the *Lord* whom *Moses* besought by an argument drawn from his *power* to be *patient* and *long-suffering* unto his people, *Numb.* 14. 17, 18.

We have seen in *Nehemiah*, the things which he remembred to doe; and which having done them, he beseecheth *God to remember*. And though the words seem to have properly a *Retrospect* onely to what had been done, yet because we finde *Nehemiah* praying when he began these *excellent works*, *Chap.* 1. 6, 11. we shall therefore extend this *prayer* both ways; both as an *humble representation* of his *own sincerity* before *God*, in what *he had done*; and likewise as an *humble imploring* of being remembred by *God*, in what he *should further do*.

For the former of these *considerations*, as the words have a *Retrospect* to what he had already done, we shall consider them under a double notion; first, as the *comfort* of this good man; secondly as his *prayer*.

As his *comfort*, he reviewed and looked back upon those *good works* which *God* had enabled him to do, with much complacency and *delight*. And this the *Lord* alloweth his servants to do: For though in some respect the *Apostle* telleth us, *That he forgat the things behinde*, *Phil.* 3. 13. As not esteeming his *work* finished, or his *pace* to be slackned upon his past acquirements, yet in regard of

comfort,

comfort, the ſame Apoſtle doth once and again make mention of his former conſcionable *converſation*, as matter of preſent rejoycing unto him, *Acts* 24.16. 2 *Cor.*1.12. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 10- 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. So did *Job*, *I have not concealed the words of the holy One*, *Job* 6. 10. The conſcience of his *true faith*, *worſhip*, *and conſtant obedience* to the words of the *holy One*, made him aſſured of *comfort* in his death; and ſo elſewhere, *Chap.* 23. 10, 11, 12. *&* *Chap.* 31. So *Hezekiah*, *Iſai.* 38. 3. Yea, *God* is pleaſed to mention the *good works* of his ſervants for their comfort, *Job* 1.8. *Joh.* 1. 47. *Acts* 10.4. *Revel.*2. 2. And he hath appointed *Officers* on purpoſe *to ſhew a man his uprightneſs*, and thereupon to comfort him, *Job* 33. 23, 26. And hath given every man a *conſcience* in his boſom, to report the conſolations of the *holy Spirit*, unto wel-doing, and to be a *continual feaſt* within him, *Prov.* 15. 15. As συντήρησις, an habit of *practical principles*, ſo it *bindes* us; as συνείδησις, a knowledge of *duty done*, ſo it *comforts* us, 1 *Joh.* 3, 20. *Qui facit præceptum comparat paracletum.*

The Reaſons hereof are,

1. A godly life hath *pardon* of failings; and this is matter of *confidence*, That as the husbandman looketh on his Field of Corn with joy, though he ſee many Weeds amongſt it, and Chaff about it: So we may look with joy on an *holy life*, though many corruptions are mixed with it, becauſe *God* doth not remember againſt us *the iniquity of our holy things*. *Pardon* of ſin is matter of

Omnia mandata facta deputantur quando quicquid non fit, ignoſcitur. Aug.

of joy, *Pſal.* 32. 1, 2. *Acts* 16. 34. And therefore *mixture* of ſin cannot deprive us of it; the *Paſſeover* was a *Feaſt*, though eaten with bitter Herbs; and a *good Conſcience* is a *feaſt*, though mingled with ſome corruptions. Nothing ſpoiled the *Feaſt* of a *Paſſeover*, but *Leaven*; and nothing ſpoils the *Feaſt* of *Conſcience*, but *Hypocriſie*.

Ille facit ut faciamus. Aug. ep. 105.

2. A godly life is *Gods own work*: it is not we, but the *Spirit of God which worketh in us*, *Matth.* 10. 20. 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Phil.* 4. 13. And as *God* reviewed his own works with ſpecial delight, ſo may we review *Gods works* in us, with comfort and delight: This the *Prophet* lays as a foundation of peace, *That God worketh our works for us*, *Iſai.* 26. 12.

3. *God* hath commanded *comfort*, firſt or laſt, to wait upon a *godly life*, as a proper adjunct thereof, *Iſai.* 32. 17. *Pſal.* 119. 165. & 32. 12. *Rom.* 14. 17. And it is a wrong to *Gods* own appointment, when we have taken *in godlineſs* to ſhut *out comfort*.

4. A *godly life honours God*, *John* 15. 8. *benefits men*, *Tit.* 3. 8. And therefore being not without *Fruit*, it is not without a foundation of *comfort*. When a man can ſay, I have finiſhed my courſe, ſerved my generation, adorned the *Goſpel*, theſe and theſe are the better for me: I have not lived like an *empty Vine*, as an unprofitable burden of the Earth; but *Gods* end hath been my end, and his *ſervice* my work; this will cauſe the *face to ſhine*, and the *heart to rejoce*.

Every man would willingly live and die comfortably;

fortably; no way ſo to do, but to lay up a foundation of comfort in an *holy converſation.* A wicked man would gladly *forget himſelf*, and run away from himſelf, *Hoc ſe quiſque modo ſemper fugit.* Lucretius. He cannot look *backward* or *inward* upon himſelf, without guilt and horror. It was therefore good counſel of an old *Rabbi*, *Ne ſis impius coram teipſo.* Be not wicked in thine own ſight, learn to reverence thy conſcience. *Cor bonum bonus ſocius*, No ſuch good company as good Conſcience; a man may then dare to be acquainted with himſelf, as ſome men have written the *Hiſtory* of their own lives. A *Leaper* cares not much for a Looking-glaſs, becauſe he ſhall ſee by it nothing but his own deformity. A *Bankrupt* cannot abide to caſt up his accompts, becauſe he ſhall finde himſelf ſo much worſe then nothing. But he that hath led an *holy life*, is like a man which hath travelled over a *beautifull valley*,, and being on the top of the *Hill*, turneth about with delight to take a view of it again.

But may a man ſo look back on a *godly life*, as to put *confidence* in the good work thereof? For anſwer hereunto, we are to diſtinguiſh,

1. *Inter rationem condignitatis, & rationem ordinis:* Between the *merit* deſerving a *Reward*, which we deny; and the *order* and *conſequence* which *God* hath put between a *good work* and the *reward*, making this *mercifully*, but yet *certainly* to follow the other, *Pſal.* 19. 11. *Prov.* 11. 18.

2. *Inter cauſam eſſendi & cognoſcendi:* Between the

the *cauſe* of *confidence à priori*, and the *Arguments* whereby to know it *à poſteriori*.

Our *good works* are not either the *merits* or *cauſe* of our confidence or comfort, but only the *Free-grace* of *God*, and *perfect Righteouſneſſe* of *Chriſt* beſtowed upou us; yet from a *good conſcience* and an *holy converſation*, as from Fruits and Effects of *Divine love* and *grace*, we may draw arguments of comfort: *For in the fear of the Lord is ſtrong confidence, Prov.* 14.26.

2. Theſe words as they bear a *retroſpect* unto *Nehemiah*'s former *actions*, are likewiſe conſiderable as a *Prayer*, *upon me for good*. And ſo good men that have done much ſervice unto the *Church* of *God* ſhould pray to be *remembred* by *God* in *favor* and *mercy*: and this *prayer is*

1. For *Acceptation* both with *God*, and with his people.

1. That the *Lord* will be pleaſed to approve of our poor endeavours to ſerve him, and ſmell a *ſavor* of reſt in our *oblations*, that he will let us know that he is well pleaſed with what we have done, that we may eat and drink with joy, when *God accepteth of our works*, as the Wiſe man ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.*9. 7.

Secondly, that the *Lord* will make our works acceptable to his people, as it is ſaid of *David*, *That whatſoever he did, pleaſed all the people*, 2 *Sam.* 3.36. And of *Mordecai*, *that he was accepted of the multitude of his Brethren*, *Eſth.* 10. 3. And ſo *Paul* prayed, *That his ſervice towards* Jeruſalem *might be acceped of the Saints*, Rom. 15.31.

2. For

2. For *condonation*; for ſince no good works of ours do bear proportion to the rigor and exactneſs of the *Law of God*, but that *all our righteouſneſs* is as a menſtruous cloth, *Iſai*, 64. 6. *Omnis noſtra humilis juſtitia, recta forſan, ſed non pura*, ſaith *Bernard*: And ſince the *Lord* appointed *Aaron* as a Type of *Chriſt*, *to bear the iniquity of the holy things of his people*, Exod. 28. 38. we muſt therefore confeſs with St. *Auſtin*. that our *Righteouſneſs* here conſiſteth. *Potius in remiſſione peccatorum quàm in perfectione virtutum.* As therefore *Job* profeſſeth, *If I ſay I am perfect, mine own mouth ſhall prove me perverſe*, Job 9. 20. And *David*, *Enter not into judgement with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight no fleſh living ſhall be juſtified*, Pſal. 143. 2. And *Paul*, *Though I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not thereby juſtified*, 1 Cor. 4.4. So this holy man *Nehemiah* prays to be *ſpared*, as well as to be remembred, as knowing that the *reward is of mercy*, and not of *debt*. [a] It was a ſweet and golden confeſſion which *Bernard* made, when he thought himſelf to be at the point of death: *I confeſs*, ſaid he, *I am not worthy, I have no merits of mine own to obtain Heaven by*: *But my Lord had a double right thereunto, an hereditary right as a Son, a meritorious Right as a Sacrifice*: *He was contented with the one Right himſelf, the other right he hath given unto me; by the vertue of which gift I doe righfully lay claim unto it, and am not confounded.*

De verbis Iſaiæ, Serm. 5.

Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. 19. cap. 27. Et contra Creſconin Gram. lib. 3. c. 80.

Chap. 13. 22.

[a] Aſſuit Satan improbis eum accuſationibus pulſans --Ille terri us & turbatus ait, Fateor non ſum dignus ego nec proprii poſſum meriti regnum obtinere Cælorum. Caterum duplici jure illud obtinens dominus meus, hæreditate patris, & merito paſſionis, Altero ipſe contentus, Alterum mihi donat, ex cujus dono jure illud mihi vendicans non confundor. Guliel. Abbas in vita Bern. lib. 1. cap. 12.

2. For *Vindication* againſt the miſconſtruction of perverſe men. *Nehemiah* had many and great adverſaries, who raiſed falſe rumors upon him, and were likely to miſrepreſent all that he did, as the *Pſalmiſt* complained of his enemies, *That they wreſted his words*, Pſal. 56. 5. So did the enemies of *Nehemiah* put perverſe conſtructions upon his worthy actions, *Nehe.* 6. 6, 14. And therefore he prays unto *God to remember him*, and to ſtrengthen him; to remember them, and to rebuke them, *Verſ.* 9, 14.

In great ſervices we have all reaſon to minde theſe three things; to beg of *God* pardon for our *failings*; acceptance of our *ſervices*; vindication of our *innocency*, and rebuke of our *adverſaries*.

Now becauſe *Nehemiah*, as a Governour, had work ſtill to do; therefore we may allow this *Prayer* a *Proſpect forward* in relation to *actions* which he was to do: And they ſerve for ſpeciall *inſtruction* unto us, upon that accompt; For beſides that, the *prayer* as to theſe *actions*, may take in the three former particulars, of *acceptance*, *pardon* and *vindication*. There are three things more which may be compriſed in it under that aſpect: It is *prayer*.

Bene ac ſapienter majores inſtituerunt ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium à precationibus capere. Plin. Panegyr.

1. For counſel and direction, *Remember me to teach me*. I have *great* and *weighty buſineſſes* go through my *hand* and *care*; I am ſubject to *errors* and *miſtakes*; one miſcarriage of mine might *open the mouths* of many to reproach me, might ſadden the hearts of many who love and honor me, might be of *dangerous conſequence* to all thy people;

Remember

Remember me therefore to teach me, ſhew me the way wherein thou wouldſt have me to go; let not *mine ignorance* betray me to diſhonour thee, or to inconvenience thy people. So *David* prayed, *Make thy way ſtraight before my face*, Pſal. 5. 8. *Cauſe me to know the way wherein I ſhould walk*, Pſalm 143. 8. So *Solomon, I am but a childe, I know not how to go out or come in: Give me therefore an underſtanding heart, that I may diſcern between good and bad; For who is able to judge this thy ſo great a people?* 1 *King.* 3. 8, 9. The *greater the actions* are which we undertake, the *greater need* we have to *implore wiſdom* for the direction of them; Even *wiſdom* to *Plough* and *Sowe* is aſcribed unto *God. Iſai.* 28. 24, 29. How much more neceſſary is it in profound and abſtruſe actions to implore his *guidance.*

Vide Pinedam de rebus Solomonis, lib. 3. cap. 9.

λέγει δ' ὅτι βῶλος ἀρίστη Βουσί τε καὶ μακέλησι λέγει δ' ὅτι δεξιαὶ ὧραι, Καὶ φυτὰ ὑγρῶσαι, καὶ σπέρματα πάντα βαλέσθαι. *Arat.*

2. For *Aſſiſtance*; for when we know what to do, we have weak hearts and weak hands, apt to be diſcouraged, apt to flag and hang down, except he be pleaſed to animate and ſtrengthen them, and as he hath promiſed, that he *will hold our hand* that it may not miſcarry, *Iſai.* 42. 6. We muſt all ſay as *Nehemiah* did, *Strengthen thou our hands*, *Chap.* 6. 9. As *Jehoſhaphat* did, *We have no might, we know not what to do*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. And therefore *our eyes are upon God*; He it is *that girdeth with ſtrength*, Pſal. 18. 39. It is not we that do any thing, but *the grace of God* which is with us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Phil.* 4. 12, 13. *Iſai.* 26. 12.

Certum eſt nos Velle cum volumus, ſed ille facit ut velimus &c. Aug. de Grat. & lib. Arb c. 16.

3. For *Succeſs*; for when we are *taught*, and when we are *ſtrengthened*, yet ſtill we muſt wait

upon *God* for his *bleſſing*. We by his *help* may doe our works, but he reſerveth it to himſelf as his *peculiar work* to impart the *bleſſing*: We may draw the Patent, but the *Prince* onely can command the Seal, and make it thereby *valid* and *effectual*, Pſal. 127. 1, 2. *Paul* and *Apollo* can only *plant* and *water*, but the *increaſe* is from *God* alone, 1 *Cor*. 3. 6. *The race is not to the ſwift, nor the battel to the ſtrong, &c.* But the *power* and *providence* of *God* overruleth all, *Eccleſ*. 9. 11. And when he pleaſeth, an handful of men ſhall diſcomfit a mighty hoſt, as *Gideon* did the *Midianites* with three hundred men: And fewer then ten thouſand *Grecians* did vanquiſh an Army of three hundred thouſand *Perſians*, in the famous battel at *Marathon*, as *Pauſanias* and *Valerius Maximus* give the numbers.

ὅυτε πλῆθός ἐστιν οὔτε ἰσχὺς ἡ ἐν τῷ πολεμωτὰς νίκας ποιοῦσα ἀλλὰ, &c. Xenophon. de Expedit. Cyri. lib. 3.

Valer. Max. lib. 5 c. 3. Pauſan. l. 4.

Now laſtly, with relation unto all *performances* which he had, or ſhould diſpatch, ſo this *prayer* is a Petition for that *gracious Reward* which the *Lord* is mercifully pleaſed to encourage his *ſervices* by, in thoſe great and difficult works wherereunto he calleth them, whereby not his ſervants onely but *his own Son*, have been animated to endure *ſufferings* and to *deſpiſe ſhame*, *Heb*. 11. 26. & 12. 2. For the *expected promiſes* do awaken our *patience* in the *Lords* work, *Heb*. 10. 36. 2 *Cor*. 7. 1. The *Apoſtle* preſſed *forward to the price*, *Phil*. 3. 14. *Fought his fight, finiſhed his courſe, kept the Faith*, in purſuance of that *Crown of Righteouſneſs* which was *ſet before him*, 2 *Tim*. 4. 8. Fot *in keeping the Commandments there is a great Reward*, *Pſal*. 19. 11.

And

And this indeed is matter of *comfort* and *encouragement* unto us, that though the works which we are to do, are difficult, and we have *withdrawing hearts*, and *weak hands*, and *fainting ſpirits*, and *potent enemies*, and *ſtrong temptations*, and having conflicted with all theſe, may haply loſe our thanks with men, and poſſibly be rewarded with hatred and ill-will; yet we work for a *Maſter* who *remembers all*, who keeps an accompt of but a *cup of cold water*, which is given to him in any of his *poor ſervants*. If a *Raven* feed his *Prophet*; if *Dogs* lick the ſores of *Lazarus*; if *Rotten rags* draw *Jeremy* from a *Dungeon*; if a *broken Potſherd* ſtand *Job* in any ſtead in his *afflictions*; if a *Basket* be a means to deliver *Paul*, or *Stalks* of *Flax* to hide the *Spies* of *Iſrael*; if the *cover* of a *Well* do protect *Davids* Intelligencers, if *ſpread garments* and *broken Boughs* contribute any thing towards the *honour of* Chriſt, there ſhall be a *Record* kept, and an *honourable mention* made of the *ſervices* even of theſe *inanimate creatures*. O what a good *Lord* do we ſerve, who keeps a *Book* for our *ſighs*, a *Bottle* for our *tears*, a *Regiſter* for but two *Mites* caſt into his *Treaſurie*? Who keeps a *Record* of gleaning of *Barley*, dipping in *Vinegar*, of a *Cake of Meale*, of a *Table*, a *Stool*, and a *Candleſtick*, and eſteemeth himſelf a *debtor* for ſuch poor things, as men ſcarce value for *ordinary courteſies*? Who would not put forth all his ſtrength in the ſervice of ſuch a *Lord*, who takes notice of the leaſt that can be done, who rendreth *Robes* for *Rags*, *Crowns* for *Crums*, turns our *Water* into *Wine*, gives

Matth. 10, 24.

1 King. 17. 6.
Luke 16. 21.
Jer. 38. 11
Job 2. 8.
2 Cor. 11. 33.
Joſh. 2. 6.
2 Sam. 17. 18, 19.
Matth. 21. 8.

Mal. 3. 16.
Pſal. 56. 8.
Mar. 12. 42.
Ruth. 2. 8, 9, 14.
1 King. 17. 13, 15.
2 Kin. 4. 8, 9, 10.

gives a *weight of glory* for *light afflictions*, and *eternal wages* for a little *momentary service*?

Now in that this *good man* doth as often as he makes this *prayer*, make mention of *God* as *his God*, *Remember me*, *O my God*: Wee may from thence certainly infer, that by this consideration he had been greatly animated in his *undertakings*, by the which he was so much comforted in the review of them, and encouraged to pray for a *mercifull reward* unto them. And this leadeth us unto Three *Observations*, which I shall but name.

I. That a *sound faith* and *particular interest* in *God* as *our God*, is a *special principle* to quicken us in *great* and *honorable undertakings*. It set *Nehemiah* at first to improve his *relation* unto the King of *Persia* for the good of his people, and the City *Jerusalem*, *Nehem.* 1. 11. & 2. 4, 8. And by the same *Argument* he encouraged the people to *valor* and *resolution*, *Neh.* 4. 20. The *Church* professeth, *That in the name of their God they would set up their Banners*, *Psal.* 20. 5. *David* went unarmed in the confidence of that name against *Goliah*, because *God* was the *God of the hosts of* Israel, 1 *Sam.* 17. 45. In all their *marches* and *motions* in the *Wilderness*, this was their *comfort*, That they had a *God* which went before them as their *Captain*, who was able to scatter all their enemies, *Num.* 10. 35, 36. *Psal.* 68. 7, 8. In this confidence *Asa* and *Jehoshaphat* applied themselves to *God as their God*, and went on with courage and comfort against huge armies of enemies, 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. & 20. 6, 7, 11, 12.

11, 12. By this faith, *Gideon, Barak, Sampſon, Jephthah, David, ſubdued Kingdoms, obtained promiſes, ſtopped the mouths of Lions, quenched the violence of the fire, eſcaped the edge of the Sword, out of weakneſſe were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, &c. Heb.* 11. 32, 34.

1. Faith is an *active* and *working grace*; *Remembring your work of faith*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Theſ.* 1. 3. It will not let men be *idle or unfruitful*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 8. It knows what a *back* and *ſtrength* it hath in the truth and power of *God*, through whom *it can do all things*, Phil. 4. 13. And thereupon what it findeth to do, it doth with its might.

πίστις ἐργατις ἀγαθῶν. *Clem. Alex. Strom. lib.* 5. *Per fidem Chriſti non ſumus liberi ab operibus ſed ab opinionibus operum. Luth. Eſt res viva, potens, operoſa, &c. Luther. in Gen.* 12. *fol.* 153.

2. It is an *Heroical grace*, as the Philoſopher ſaith of *Wiſdome*, That it is ἕξις τιμιωτάτων, the knowledge of the moſt *honourable things*; ſo we may ſay or *Faith*. That it undertaketh the moſt *honourable thing*., eyeth *great objects*, purſueth *great ends*, looketh upon *all things as poſſible*, *Mark* 9. 23. and therefore is not diſmayed at any. What an *Heroical Faith* was that of *Joſhuah*, whereby he prevailed with *God* in *prayer* to ſtop the courſe of the *Sun* and *Moon*, while *Iſrael* was avenged on their enemies? *Joſh*, 10. 12. And though *Ordinarily Faith* be not a *Faith of miracles*, yet it hath a *nobleneſſe* and a *greatneſſe* in it, whereby it can in the aſſurance of its *intereſt in God*, ſet upon *great actions* which are conformable unto his *will*.

Metaph. ſ. lib 1. *Fides maxima & Heroica operatur, Luth. in Gen.* 29.

3. It is *valiant* and a *victorious Grace*, is not afraid of Men or Devils when it hath made ſure of *God*. It *quencheth* the *fiery darts of Satan*; it

overcomes

overcomes the world: One *David* having *God* for his *God* was not afraid of ten thousand of Armies of men, *Psalm* 3. 6. & 27. 3. By his *God*, *he can run ne through a Troop*, and *leap over a wall*, and *break a Bow of Steele*, Psal. 18. 29. Nothing is invincible to *Faith*, it can *level Mountains*, Zach. 4. 7. It can *more then conquer* greatest difficulties, *Rom.* 8. 35, 37. As one man by an *Engine* may *move Bodies*, which an hundred without it could not stir; so by the *Engine* of *Faith*, things are many times effected, which to *Sense* and *Reason* do seem impossible.

Credendi omnia sunt possibilia; fides facit ex eo quod nihil est ut sit, & ex impossibilibus facit omnia possibilia. --Figit cor in illud quod omnino eis absurdum & impossibile, contentum verbo. Luth. in Gen. 27. fol. 405.

4. It is a *patient grace*; it is not discouraged with every *Obstacle*, not dismayed with every *terriculament*, nor wearied with every *encounter*; but like *Box*, or *Holly*, and such other Trees, retains its verdure in the *winter*, and holds out amidst all difficulties unto the *End*, knows how near the *promised mercies* are, and doth chearfully press forwards towards them; says with those in the *Prophet*, *Isai.* 25. 9. *This is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. Faith* doth not suffer a man to *draw back*, but patiently to continue in *well-doing*, that he may after a little while receive the *promises*, *Heb.* 10. 36, 39. *Rom.* 2. 7.

5. It is a *praying grace*, can in every exigent and distress call down invisible help from *God*: And none go with more vigor about any enterprise then they, who being *backed* with *potent friends*, and having *free access* unto *great Treasures*, are able in any extremity to attain the *concurrent Counsels*, and *succours* of others, to further their designs,

ſigns. The *Apoſtle* bids us by *Faith* to ask *wiſdom* of *God*, that thereby *patience* may go thorow and have her *perfect work*, *Jam.* 1. 4, 5, 6. *God* hath honoured *Faith* and *Repentance*, in the *Goſpel*, above other *graces*, becauſe they have a peculiar *vertue* to carry us out of our ſelves in Prayer unto *God*: And no *graces* do more promote great *actions* then *ſelf-denying graces*, when men have *ends* and *aids* above themſelves. *Carnal ends*, *Domeſtical intereſts*, and *private affections*, do uſually obſtruct *noble undertakings*; becauſe ſuch men, as ſoon as *ſtorms* ariſe, and *difficulties* ſhake them, forſake the *proper* and eternal *merits* of the *buſineſſe*, and hold or alter their *reſolutions*, according as their own *perſonal hopes* or *fears* do dictate unto them. And therefore the beſt way to make ſtrong and ſteady progreſs in any ſerious employment, is to have *God for our God*, that in every difficulty we may be able to have recourſe unto him for *counſel*, *Wiſdom*, *Succour*, *Support*, and may be *ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

II. As *Faith* is a ſpecial principle of *action* in *great undertakings*; ſo it is a ſpecial ground of *comfort* in the reviewing of them, when we can ſay, In this *action*, though full of many difficulties, yet *Faith in God as my God*, hath upheld me and carried me through it to the end: I have undertaken it, not in mine own ſtrength, nor in the confidence of mine own Wiſdom; but in an *holy fear*, and *comfortable dependence* upon *God*; I have aimed at his glory, and at *publick intereſt*; I have not immixed nor interwoven in it, any *carnal counſels*, or

sinful projects of mine own: I have laboured to keep a good Conscience in doing of mine own duty, and have cast my self upon his holy Providence for the event: In this case the Lord doth ordinarily return such an answer of Peace to Works that are done in the fear of his *Name*, by the *Rule* of his *word*, in the comfort of his *Promises*, and with submission to his *Providence*, as that one way or other, the heart shall be able to take comfort in it: For *Faith* is a succesful *Grace*, and hath a promise of prospering. *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his Prophets, so shall you prosper*, 2 Chron. 20. 20. By *Faith Israel* passed through the Red Sea, and saw the victory of their *Faith* in the ruine of their proud Enemies, *Exod.* 14 30, 31.

If the Lord bless the undertaking it self, with a desired successe, *Faith* hath this comfort, That it is a *blessing* received from the hand of a *Father*, an evidence of his *Love*, an accession unto the gift of his *Son*, *with whom he freely giveth all other things*. It is the portion which *God* hath graciously given unto his servant; and though the thing given be good it self, yet the *favor* and *blessing* of *God* which comes along with it, is much more excellent; as the Money in the Mouth of the Fish, or the Pearl in the Body of the Oyster, is more precious then that which was the *vehiculum* of it.

And on the other hand, if the *Lord* suffer not our *labors* to succeed, yet he is *our God* himself still, and all *desirable good* is eminently comprised.

priſed in him, who is a God *All-ſufficient to thoſe that walk before him, and are upright.* Though he anſwer me not in the particular, wherein I waited upon him, he ever anſwers, *Secundum cardinem deſiderii*, in ſuch a way as is better for me: Though the iſſue be not *ſecundum voluntatem*, according to my will, yet it is ever *ad utilitatem*, according to my profit and good. *Paul* had not the thing he expreſly prayed for, to have the meſſenger of Satan depart from him, but he had a ſufficiency of Grace to uphold him, which was much better. And as a Merchant is not angry with his Factor, though he ſend him not the Commodities he wrote for, if he ſend him thoſe that are ten times more beneficial; no more is a *Believer* diſpleaſed with the good providence of *God*, when he receives in anſwer to his Labors and Prayers, not what himſelf expected, but what *God* knew much better for him.

Aug. Confeſ. lib. 5. c. 8.

Bonus Deus qui non tribuit ſæpe quod volumus, ut tribuat quod malimus. Aug. epiſt. 34. & Tract. 73. in Joan. & Tom. 7. lib. de Unitat. Eccleſ. c. 19. & contr. Julian. lib. 5. cap. 4. & ep. 121. cap. 14.

III. A ſpecial intereſt in *God* as our *God*, is a notable argument in *Prayer*, for the obtaining of a gracious *Reward* unto our ſincere Services; for upon this ground doth this *holy man* thrice deſire to be remembred of *God*: And upon this ground did our *Saviour* teach his Diſciples to build all their Petitions by calling God *Our Father*. It is the Prayer of *Faith*, the *Prayer of a Righteous man* that is effectual, *Jam.* 5. 15, 16. For the Lord will not hear thoſe that *regard iniquity in their heart*, their Prayer is an abomination, *Pſal.* 66. 18. The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the *Prayer of the Righteous* Prov. 15. 29.

It is true, he is pleased sometimes to take notice of the *Cries* and *Prayers* of *Nature*, and to return some answer unto them, that even wicked men may know that it is not in vain even for them to *seek the Lord*; and therefore such as their *Prayers* are, such *Returns* he is pleased many times to make unto them. So *God* heard the voice of *Ishmael* crying for water, and shewed *Hagar* a Well, *Gen.* 21. 17, 19. He took notice of the *humiliation* of *Ahab*, and thereupon respited the *judgement* which he had threatned, 1 *King.* 21. 29. As *Abraham*, though he gave the *blessing* and the *inheritance* unto *Isaac*, yet he gave gifts to the rest of his Children, *Gen.* 25. 5, 6. So the *Lord*, though he reserve his great *Reward* for the *heirs of promise*, yet he leaveth not himself without *witness* even amongst others, giving such *benefits* unto them as they tender *services* unto him; they give none but *outward services*, desire none but *outward benefits*; and according to the *nature* of their *services* and *desires*, the Lord answereth them with meer *outward good things*.

But the prayer of *Faith*, pleading the great and precious *promises* of the *new Covenant*, and calling upon *God* as a *Father* by the *Spirit* of his *Son* shed abroad into the hearts of those who are *heirs of promise*, hath two great advantages above any other meer Natural Prayer.

1. It is sure to obtain *pardon* for what failings and miscarriages proceed from *humane infirmity*, the Lord sparing his children, *as a man spareth his own son that serveth him*, *Mal.* 3. 17. and

Christ

Christ bearing the iniquity of our *holy things*..

2. It is sure to obtain *Spiritual Rewards* for those holy and sincere Performances, which proceed from the grace and assistance of the *Spirit of Christ*; the Lord being pleased, first, by his *grace* to work all our works for us, *Isai.* 26. 12. And then by a second *Grace* to *Reward* them, and to Crown his own Mercies in us. *For verely there is a Reward for the Righteous*, Psal. 58. 11. *Matth.* 10, 41. And thus we receive Grace for Grace; the Grace of *Remuneration* for the Grace of *Obedience*; the Grace of *God* enabling us to work, and the Grace of *God* rewarding us for working: for though it be the Work which is revealed, yet the Reward is not of mans work, but of *Gods* Grace, *Rom.* 4. 4. & 11. 6. Both these Graces did this holy *Nehemiah* beg, in the confidence of his interest *in God as his God*. *Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me, according to the greatness of thy mercy*, *Nehe.* 13. 22. Remember me to *spare me* for my sinfull infirmities; Remember me to *Reward me* for my sincere performances; and both these onely upon the accompt of thy great Mercy. Nothing but great Mercy passeth by many sins; nothing but great Mercy rewardeth weak services.

I have done with the words, and have from all but a word more to say unto you. What the nature of that *great undertaking* is, which God hath thus graciously moved your hearts to begin at the doors of his *Sanctuary*, and to consecrate your selves unto, by inquiring of him, and *seeking of him a Right way*, is much better known to you then

then to me, who have little inſpection into ſuch things: But being a very weighty buſineſs, and poſſibly full of *variety* and *difficulty*, and all men being ſubject to Errors and *miſtakes*, to *impotency* and *infirmity*, to ſinful *failings* and *defects*, to *difference* of *judgements*, and divided *affections*, and all *humane actions* being obnoxious to miſconſtructions and various *miſcarriages*: And *God* having reſerved *events* and *ſucceſſes* in his proper power, it is therefore your duty in all your *addreſſes* unto *action*, to make your firſt applications unto *God*, that he would lead you by his *Spirit*, and cauſe you to make his *Word* your *Counſellors*; that he would *work all your works for you*, and ſhine upon your *counſels* and *undertakings*, by his ſpecial bleſſing; that he would preſerve you from all miſtakes & miſunderſtandings, and pour out upon you a *Spirit* of *unity* and *agreement*; that he would forgive all your *failings*, and teach you to approve your *hearts* and *Conſciences* unto him in well-doing; that your labours may ſo be converſant about *treaſures* here below, as that your hearts and affections may be upon things above; and you may with ſuch *ſincerity*, *courage*, *zeal*, and holy *affections*, go through the *duties* of your places and callings here, as that you may be able to look *backward* with comfort upon a *fruitful life*, and *forward* with *Faith* and *Hope* upon a *Glorious Reward*, and conclude your *lives* and your *labours*, as *Nehemiah* doth his Book, with a *Remember me, O my God for good.* And we ſhould all learn ſo to lead our lives, with ſuch an eye to *Gods Word* and *Rule*, to his *Glory* and *honour*, to the

ſervice

ſervice of his *Church*, and our *Generation*; to be ſo diligent, careful, prudent, ſincere, truſty, faithful, in every *ſervice* which lieth upon us, as that when we come to die, and give up our *accompts* to him, we may be able to ſay, *Lord*, I have been *faithful* in that *little ſervice* wherein thou haſt employed me, let me now *enter into my Maſters joy*: I have remembred thy *Name*, to glorifie thee: I have remembred thy *People*, to ſerve them: I have remembred thy *Houſe*, and the *Offices* thereof: I have remembred the *Widow*, the *Fatherleſs*, the *Poor* and *Helpleſs*, to provide for them: I have remembred every *truſt* impoſed upon me, and have not by any *wilful indiligence*, *imprudence*, or *unfaithfulneſs* betrayed it, but have *laboured* to adorn my *general calling* by *ſincerity* and *fidelity* in my *particular calling*: And now, be thou graciouſly pleaſed to *remember me for good*, *and to ſpare me according to the multitude of thy mercies*.

FINIS.